

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Planning WPC Testimony](#)
Subject: - 6/5/26 Agenda Item #2 TESTIMONY
Date: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 7:47:38 AM

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Planning Commissioners,

June 2, 2026

I am a property owner on Hawai'i Island and a longtime member of this community. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on Bill 147.

I appreciate the intent of this measure, and I believe we share the same goal — a thriving, sustainable community for the people of this island. I offer my testimony in that spirit.

My husband and I moved to the Big Island 25 years ago, built our lives here, and raised five children born and raised on island. We are deeply involved in our community — serving charitable organizations, school districts, local sports, our hospital, and our church. We own two properties; maintain long-term rentals with tenants of 10+ years at stable/affordable rents, and operate one short-term rental.

When COVID hit, my husband lost his job in the hospitality industry. Despite our commitment to never leave the island, we were forced to relocate to the mainland on one week's notice to protect our family financially. We refused to sell our home — the one we poured our savings and sweat equity into — and made the decision to short-term rent it in our absence.

Our on-site hosts are a local family who have lived on the property for eight years. This arrangement has allowed them to remain in their home at an affordable rate while supplementing their income during a difficult economy. It has been a genuine partnership that works for everyone.

Here is the full picture of what this property contributes:

- 9 local employees supported
- 12 people housed affordably across our long-term rentals
- Full tax compliance — GE, TA, HCTAT, non-homeowner exclusion property taxes, and income taxes totaling close to 40% to the County and State
- Local insurance company, ADA-compliant accommodations, zero neighbor complaints
- Consistent referrals to local restaurants, businesses, and agritourism activities aligned with the State's own initiative to promote agritourism

We are not profiting. We are covering our costs and holding on to our home until we can return — which we plan to do within 1–2 years when our children finish school.

If this bill passes as written, the consequences are significant and concrete: We will be forced to sell. The property will almost certainly sell for cash to an out-of-state or international buyer — precisely the outcome this bill is trying to prevent. Our on-site family will lose both their housing and their income. Our 9 employees will be let go. Our long-term tenants may face rent increases or displacement as we try to absorb the loss. Our family — five children born and raised on this island — will likely never return. We will be priced out of the home we worked our entire lives to keep.

I also want to note the policy contradiction we face: we have been told we cannot build additional housing units on our land to provide more long-term rentals. We cannot build on empty lots we own. The very path that would allow us to transition away from short-term rental has been closed to us.

With respect, I ask the Council to consider the following:

- Grandfather existing, compliant short-term rental operations under this bill.
- Clarify how existing B&B operations will be treated and ensure they are not inadvertently placed into nonconforming status. Provide a clear, realistic pathway for new B&B permits.
- Restructure fines to be proportional to the severity of a violation — not broadly punitive in ways that harm good-faith operators.

- Clarify the legal basis for restricting STR accommodations to a host's primary residence. If State law focuses on whether a use is accessory to agriculture — rather than where guests physically sleep — that distinction matters and deserves a clear answer.
- Expand ADU allowances to include more agriculture land in order to provide additional properties for long term rentals.
- Address the property tax cap issue for short-term rental properties. Restoring pre-cap rates would meaningfully reduce the financial pressure forcing families like ours to sell.

I understand you are hearing many testimonies, and ours is one of many. But I want you to know: we are not investors. We are a local family doing everything we can to hold on to our home, support the people around us, and return to the island we love. The friends we have made on the mainland call us the 'Hawaii refugees' — and they know our plan has always been to come back.

Please don't make that impossible.

Mahalo for your time and for the care you bring to these decisions.

Respectfully,

Anonymous
Kona, Hawai'i